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THE CASE AGAINST DIVORCE

by

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It came from Turtle Creek—strange that I should remember the postmark from among hundreds of letters, but this one burned itself like a fire into my memory. It was written to thank me for praying for her and only incidentally mentioned divorce, but it tragically summed up the dilemma of thousands of modern females as they contemplate divorce, or rather the failure of marriage. Her big, strong, dominant male had walked out, asserting his right to freedom, leaving her ("the weaker sex"?) and four children to wrest food, clothing, and shelter from a reluctant world. Said she:

> "I had a wonderful Christmas, so did the children, even though their Daddy doesn't care for them...He hasn't seen my baby and she is beautiful, and he did not even remember them with a Christmas Card...My oldest daughter (4 years) did cry and ask why he didn't come but I couldn't answer too well. Maybe someday I'll understand...We had a gift for him in case he came...I can't seem to have any feeling for him at all.

The fact that this solitary, courageous figure, caught in the cruel maelstrom of one of modernity's most tragic and complex problems, confuses character breakdown and marriage disintegration with the granting of a divorce does not alter her situation. In the parlance of cafe society, "She and her beaumance chucked it some time ago," and now only the legal matter of divorce remains, and, of course, the lonely road ahead.

America's divorce rate at 400,000 per year is the highest in the world, five times greater than that of Canada. Children are involved to the tune of 300,000. Studies show that, since 1890, when public morals decline, both crime and divorce increase. As international treaties have become scraps of paper, so have marriage licenses.

Church and State Responsible

Archaeologists of the future may dub us "divorce-crazy." Time tables to Reno, where marriage vows are jettisoned and where richochetted romances are

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The Editor's Page

AMERICA'S GROWING CRIME PROBLEM

The rate of crime in America is growing at an alarming rate. According to the Uniform Crime Reports just recently released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the number of offenses known to police in 1957 totaled over 2,796,400. This is the highest crime figure in our nation's history—9.1 percent above 1956 and 23.9 percent over an average for the previous five years.

Among the eight categories listed, changes ranged from a decrease of 0.7 percent for murder, the only category to show a decrease in 1957, to an increase of 12.2 percent for burglary. The total dollar loss after recovery deductions amounted to about $212,000,000.

In terms of volume alone, crime now stands at 56.2 percent above the 1950 level and is rising four times as fast as the total population which is up only 13% since 1950.

Youth continues to play a large part in crime. On the basis of reports from 1,473 cities with a total population of 40,176,369, 26.4% of the robberies, 54.8% of the burglaries, 51% of the larcenies, 67.6% of the auto thefts and 32.3% of the crimes of receiving stolen property were committed by persons under 18 years of age. Of the 2,068,677 crimes committed in these 1,473 cities having a population of 2,500 or more, 1,848,725 were committed by males and 219,952 by females. 47.2% of these crimes were due directly to beverage alcohol.

Violation of liquor laws	43,347
Driving while intoxicated	101,099
Drunkenness	832,268
Total due directly to liquor	976,614

There is no doubt that liquor was also a major factor in many of the other crimes listed, such as vagrancy, offenses against family and children, sex offenses, disorderly conduct, etc.

This alarming increase in crime ought to be a warning to us that there is something seriously wrong with the moral and spiritual health of our nation and that unless the American people will awake out of their intoxicated stupor and turn to God in repentance and faith, and follow His guidance in correcting the situations which breed lawlessness and crime, we will ultimately be cast upon the rubbish heap of the ages with the ruins of other civilizations that have risen to power only to be crushed by their own wickedness.

America, with her Christian background and culture enjoys a marvelous opportunity to serve as a pilot plant to the world demonstrating what a Christian nation really is. But instead of seizing the opportunity and redeeming the time, we are, as these F. B. I. reports would indicate, demonstrating to the world a pilot-plant in criminal procedure.

J. Renwick Patterson

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CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES TESTIFY AGAINST LIQUOR

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

Washington, D.C.—Spokesmen for Protestant church groups testified at Senate hearings here in favor of a bill to ban inter-state advertising of alcoholic beverages. Some of them are shown here at the hearing. Left to right are James V. Scully, editor of The Winner; Dr. Caradine R. Hooton, general secretary of the Methodist Board of Temperance and president of the Interdenominational Committee on Alcohol Problems; the Rev. Donald M. Gill of the National Association of Evangelicals; Dr. J. Warren Hastings of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ); and Dr. J. R. Patterson, executive secretary of the National Reform Association and a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Patterson Testifies On Langer Bill

At the invitation of the Legislative Committee of the National Temperance and Prohibition Council, Dr. J. Renwick Patterson, executive secretary of the National Reform Association and editor of the *Christian Statesman,* attended the hearings and gave testimony in support of the Langer bill (S.582) against alcoholic beverage advertising before the U. S. Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee.

The hearings were held in the Senate Caucus Room of the Senate Office Building in Washington and extended through April 22nd and 23rd and was then postponed until April 29th.

No action will be taken by the Committee on the bill until after the hearings have been printed by the government printing office and delivered to the members of the Committee for study. Send letters to Senator Warren G. Magnuson, Chairman, or to one of your own senators if a member of the Committee, Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C, urging that the bill be reported out of committee.

The testimony presented by Dr. Patterson will be printed in the July issue of the *Christian Statesman.*

MEMORIAL DAY

Friday, May 30th is Memorial Day when our thoughts turn in a special way in remembrance of our loved ones who have departed this life and are no longer among us.

It is a time when tribute is paid to our honored war dead, and when we think anew of the heritage that is ours, purchased at the price of their blood.

Miss Carol Couch, a 16 year old Texas High School Junior is the author of this inspiring essay entitled, "This Is My Heritage." The essay appeared in a late issue of the Congressional Record where it was inserted at the request of Hon. Lyndon B. Johnson. As we observe Memorial Day we will do well to ponder the thoughts she lays before us.

THIS IS MY HERITAGE
(By Carol Couch)

My life began when the lives of so many others were ending so horribly. The world that I came into was resounding in frightful screams. Unlike the crying of a helpless baby, the screams and cries were those of nations—equally as helpless. The time I speak of is World War II. As a tiny baby, I knew nothing of the strife and anxiety which existed around me. Slowly, relentlessly, the enemy swallowed up the helpless nations that stood in its path; and with each step it took, it became more and more a threat to my own America. Husbands,

fathers, sons—the men and strength of our Nation passed in a never-ending stream across the waters of our world. The world trembled with the clash of metal and the cries of agony. Then abruptly it was over.

Quiet enveloped the earth. It was the quiet of a tomb, the quiet of a home where the tennis racket of a teen-age son stood in the corner—never to feel the touch of his hand again. It was the quiet of a clouded day when no sweetheart's laughter would bring sunlight into the gloom. The stream had begun again—this time in reverse, and much slower. Some returned unharmed, some on crutches or stretchers. There were those who returned in flag-draped coffins, and those who returned not at all. Wounds of the flesh heal quickly, but those of the heart and soul are much slower. After living in fear and hate for so many years, we had to learn the ways of peace.

Slowly we began our task. As war had changed the land, it had changed the people, too. We began, by degrees, to return our land to what it had been. Our industries boomed. Our inventions and discoveries raised our standard of living. The luxuries we produce have made our homes more and more comfortable. We are a nation of prosperity, but not one of neglect. We have not forgotten war. Each year we spend billions to insure that if another war comes, we will be prepared.

This is my heritage. This Nation, to which I was born when its life was threatened, is mine. Its hills and valleys are mine. The sunlight shining on its rippling waters and its fields of waving wheat are mine. The dainty wildflowers that make a rainbow across the green of its meadows are mine. They have been watered with the blood of our soldiers and the tears of our women. They, too, are mine. I pray to our Heavenly Father that I shall never forget what price was paid for my heritage. It is my responsibility to remember—to remember my privilege and my heritage.

THE CASE AGAINST DIVORCE

(Continued from page 1)

called "splituation-deals," are popular. In one "divorce-happy" American city graduation parties are sometimes given for the better known of the more than 10,500 who annually seek separation in its courts. Of the situation in this same city, where a witness is paid $5 to attest to six weeks residence, one authority has said: "The whole thing is much less a question of *how* you lived with your spouse during your married years than *where* you lived during the last forty-two days."

In spite of the dual facts that divorce is "the formal recording of a personal catastrophe," and, "as in many other matters of morality, the American public does not approve of divorce, but it indulges in it freely," church and state go merrily along seemingly little bothered about this tampering with, this kicking around, of a sacred institution which was certainly, along with sensuality, one of the major contributory causes of the breakdown of the Roman Empire. Adultery, desertion, crime, cruelty, neglect—these are symbols of a greater national tragedy than the tragedy of divorce—the disintegration of family life. Add to this the imbecility of our present divorce proceedings and a situation results which is exceedingly hard on the most delicate but most potent of the five major social institutions, the family.

"Society is Responsible"

The socially prominent do all within their power to help create the impression that mates are like streetcars—another will come along shortly. After one poor miner's daughter had received $5,500,000 in settlement, which gave her "her own Ft. Knox," as she chewed gum, her lawyer cried, "It's wonderful...No hard feelings. No recriminations." With that, she was "un-married." The heir to a well-known fortune recently obtained his twelfth marriage license! The wife of a dentist in Detroit a few weeks ago announced to her husband, after asking for a divorce:

> "I don't love you any more. You don't know how to live. You're small. I want to live big now...I might as well tell you there is another man...He makes $55,000 a year." Whereupon, the dendist went out and murdered the other man.

Outside America the battle also rages. It is generally agreed that a certain Baltimorean was barred from being Queen of England, not because she was a commoner or even an American, but because she was a divorcee. Egypt's Queen Narriman, who had cooed sometime ago in her memoirs about Farouk, "His shoul-

rs fascinated me, and his arms and his werful wrists covered with dark, virile ir," found herself, according to *Time's* port, in exile with her cherry-red Mer-des-Benz, appealing for a Moslem vorce.

w is Responsible.

The eight million couples in the United ites who have received divorces in the st ten years are not the only culprits this confused picture. Both civil and clesiastical courts are to blame. A mmittee appointed by President Truman d headed by Mr. Eric Johnston, said of e situation regarding divorce proceed-gs:

"Our divorce laws are a mess. They are rotten. No language can be too strong. The lawyers and judges are bitter about their impotence under existing procedures. Social workers view the legalism and fiction of divorce with unconscionable scorn. The press and periodicals treat the divorce laws, including the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, with outspoken contempt."

is situation is so appalling that one wyer wrote: "In the whole administra-n of justice, there is nothing that even notely can compare in terms of rotten-ss with divorce proceedings." The ex-ing legal situation, said he, "puts a emium on perjury, fraud, and collusion d probably serves to increase the num-r of divorces." "The fewer the grounds, e bigger the lies," said one judge. Our ws regarding matrimony are a confused xture. Said Judge Ploscome:

"The Roman Law, the Canon Law of the Catholic Church, the Law of the English Ecclesiastical Courts, the Common Law, the free and easy law of the American frontier, all have left their mark on our matrimonial legislation."

vorce is called the worst "social ague" of our century, our "legal hor-," America's "biggest national scan-," a "racket" of indescribable pro-tions.

Ecclesiastical courts must bear their are of the blame. The various denominations run all the way from recognizing only the Biblical ground (plus wilful desertion in some cases) to those which ask no questions at all of the divorcees who come for remarriage. The Roman church has always found ways of evaporating certain marriages by annulment as though they never existed. No wonder the plain people are confused by this babel of voices about this important matter of the church's teaching on divorce.

For many in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, amid this confusion, there are some ancient but authoritative directives which disquiet our consciences. There is Malachi's: "For I hate divorce, says the Lord...(2:16 RSV). There is Jesus': "Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery." (Lk.16:18 RSV – Matt. broadens it to allow for unchastity – see 5:32 and 19:9). There is Paul's: "A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives." (I Cor.7:39 RSV – broadened apparently in I Cor.7:19 to allow the deserted partner freedom, evidently to seek divorce and remarry.)

Opposition to All Divorce

The overall course of action to be followed by church and state is not entirely clear to me, but it has been revealed to me the course which I as minister and pastor and counsellor should follow in the immediate future. Whether we should have a Federal law governing divorce, or uniform state laws; whether the churches should all stand together on one rigid, literalistic interpretation of our Lord's words in the Synoptic Gospels or whether we should stand with the National Catholic Family Life Conference in "the rejection of all divorce" – these are moot questions, the adage, "Life by the yard is hard – life by the inch is a cinch," helps here. One step at a time in this complex matter. So I begin with this:

I am basically and fundamentally opposed to divorce, all divorce. In counselling, I begin there. Surgeons do not begin by killing the patient, neither should we ministers begin by burying the marriage.

The soldier obsessed with the idea of retreating will not stand long and fight. I am no fool. Well do I know that I can be blasted from this position for it is hell on earth to live with some godless people, but it takes facts as sharp as shrapnel, as firm as steel, to move me from this conviction. I do not agree with the anthropologist who maintains that "divorce is inevitable in a culture built on ever-expanding personal choice." As in other deep matters, I accept the New Testament ideal of marriage. Stated briefly it is this: Marriage is an organic and indissoluble union of one husband and one wife, and it is a permanent life relation. These two are to be bound together both physically and in the deepest mystical sense, loving one another with a complete love, as Christ loved the church.

Goals Sought Are False

Now, most of those who come to talk about their marital problems and who are contemplating divorce are twisted in their thinking. The goals they seek are utterly false. This is true of the 25-year old who confessed to me that she had had illicit relations more than fifty times, and who said, when I probed to find if she felt remorse, that she felt only a little let down! Letting them push around this sacred institution gives them more false ideas, or confirms them in their error. Judge Miner of Chicago says that people who come into his court "think in terms of personal pleasure rather than thinking of...home... and children." Divorce has become too thinkable.

Methods Used Are Immoral

Furthermore, a part of this strong stand stems from the fact that divorce is now Big Business which means that of necessity it has become depersonalized. Not only that, but the methods they use in getting divorces are all too often immoral. It has been called "a mild sort of perjury." Impotency, adultery, desertion, infamous crime, drunkenness, cruelty, neglect, insanity – these are often recognized as legitimate grounds, but they have a catch-all – mental cruelty – often allowed, which sometimes means a trifling complaint like, "When he went on trips, he wouldn't take me along." Since they do not accept marriage for life, they use any means, however crude, and godless, to set themselves free.

Examples Set Are Devastating

The case against divorce is made even stronger when one contemplates the example it sets before children. One small boy, victim of a broken home, ran away from his mother and, when apprehended and asked why he did it, replied, "My Daddy doesn't love me any more." Hostesses who ride the great transcontinental streamliners from coast to coast say the most pathetic and confused people they handle are the hordes of children shuttling to mother in California, then to father in the East. The Judge of the Circuit Court, Cook County, Chicago, has said of family breakdown and divorce:

> "And the more tragic phase of it is that 80% of the youngsters find themselves ultimately in the juvenile courts, many, many of whom I have disposed of in the Criminal Court and sent to penal institutions...These youngsters cost Illinois alone $13 million annually..."

It is difficult for children with divided loyalties and without the corrective balance afforded by both father and mother to grow into normal human beings, yet it must be confessed that in some instances it is better for children to live with one parent happily and without tension than to remain in a home where love is dead.

Family Courts of Tomorrow

Two complex cases in my own recent pastoral experience point up the inadequacy of present methods of dealing with the divorce problem. In the first, the man's mother said on the day her son married, "Some day I'll have him back." Twelve years later, on the day the divorce was made final, this hell-cat said, triumphantly, "Well, I've accomplished my purpose!" In the second, the husband after wandering the earth for several years, now lonely and ill, asked the wife if he might come back, take a room in her

house, "with the privileges of a husband." Many hundreds of cases which involve a dozen different angles, all of which are at bottom spiritual, lead me to dream of the day when we will have family courts, as advocated by Judge Paul W. Alexander. Sensing that the law is punitive, punishing good and rewarding evil, this able judge would take a leaf from the juvenile court and substitute the philosophy of guilt and punishment; it would make the criterion for divorce not "Is the defendent guilty?" but "What is best for this family?" and consequently for society?

Burying Live Corpses

The Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations, Toledo, has said:

> "To call me a judge is something of a misnomer. I am really a sort of public mortician. In the past eleven years I have presided over the final obsequies of twenty-two thousand dead marriages. The trouble is I have buried a lot of live corpses. There was no sure way to discover and resuscitate the spark of life that surely remained in many of them."

Just so! All ministers can think with shame of having helped to bury live marital corpses. I still believe that marriage is a definite step taken once and for all. I still believe passionately in the gospel of redemption, in the power of Christ to reach, redeem, and restore even the perfidious mate, yes, even that man about whom it was said, "He *is* married, all but his right eye!" I may even have been party to some divorces where infidelity prevailed, and where God had forgiven the guilty, but the injured mate had not. I believe that the Holy Spirit is ever at work in all of us and even now is making some worried over the collapse of marriage, which may be God's rod of judgment upon our superficial, self-centered civilization. God's way in marriage has to do with the fruits of the spirit which are love, joy and peace. And these are "beautiful beyond the singing of them," as Alan Paton would say.

While the judges, sociologists, lawyers, social workers, lawmakers, psychiatrists, and psychologists make up their minds what to do about this whole matter, I'll go on opposing all divorce, at least for the time being. There are immediate practicalities such as the remarriage of the divorced, and the larger matter of the cause and cure of the breakdown of the family, which must be faced but these matters must wait for a later treatment. Suffice it here to see the problem, and to take a stand so that I can't be stampeded by the herd.

FROM THE STUDY WINDOW

(Continued from page 8)

When God looks down at America, what does He see? A nation sharing many of His blessings, a nation just and kind because of His guidance, a nation honoring Him in lip and ignoring Him in heart and mind?

If so, here lies a central part of our responsibility as Christians and Americans.

I hereby give, devise and bequeath to the NATIONAL REFORM ASSOCIATION (incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania),

FORM OF BEQUEST

the sum of.....dollars (.....)

(In case a testator wishes to leave some particular asset or piece of property instead of a sum of money he can do so by inserting a clear and sufficient description of it in place of words "the sum of," etc.)

FROM THE STUDY WINDOW

David M. Carson

Head of the Department of Political Science, Geneva College

For several issues, these back-page paragraphs have been studies in God's standards for national life as revealed in the Bible. Though we learn these standards from God's revelation to the Hebrews, they were not meant to apply uniquely to the Hebrew nation. The prophets apply the same standards in judging the life of Moab and Tyre, of Egypt and Assyria. When God looks down at America, he seeks the same characteristics: justice and mercy and reverence before God.

* * *

When God looks at America, what does he see?

He sees a country in which justice is taken for granted. It would be naive to say that it is always perfectly achieved. But to a degree seldom reached and in most of the world undreamed of, America offers justice to its people. The careful protection of individual rights by the Supreme Court is vivid evidence.

God sees a country in which mercy is characteristic. State governments, in cooperation with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare of the Federal government, see to it that the economic needs of anyone in straitened circumstances are met. Organized charities offer specialized help to many more. The public mention of a sick child will burden the postman with mail from a warmhearted people.

What about reverence for Himself? We have added the pregnant phrase "under God" to the pledge of our allegiance to the flag. We have taken as our official national motto the great statement "In God We Trust," and we have displayed on coins and stamps, most vividly on th stamps which our foreign mail bear Annually we gather, at the President suggestion, to give thanks to God for th blessings of the year.

Are these expressions of faith in God true measure of the national mood? T the extent they are true, the heart of Go rejoices:

> The Lord taketh pleasure
> in them that fear Him.

If they are not, God cannot take pleasu in emptiness and hypocrisy:

> Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me...Woe unto them.

The sincerity of individual Christians i unquestioned. But there is reason t question the reality of our national piety Most official utterances of our statesmen the political thinking of individual Amer cans, our popular pride in success an terror at any failure, these suggest view of the world and of ourselves tha stops short of God.

For nearly a century the National Re form Association has favored an amend ment to the Constitution, recognizin Jesus Christ as the source of governmen tal authority, His law as the basic guid of our conduct, and Himself as the be stower of blessing. Not at all to multipl empty statements of faith, but to cha lenge our nation to a devout reverenc for Almighty God and for His Son, Jesu Christ.

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